

RioTinto

Our commitment to

# Indigenous Australia





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# Acknowledgement of Country

Our Australian operations are located on land that has belonged to Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. We respect their ongoing and deep connection to Country and recognise their vast knowledge of the land and waters.

Our Acknowledgement of Country is rooted in this understanding, which continues to develop as part of our commitment to genuine partnerships with Indigenous peoples and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and further acknowledge the important role that Indigenous peoples, employees, and partners continue to play within our business and the communities in which we live and work.



# Overview of Rio Tinto



Rio Tinto is a mining and metals company operating in 35 countries around the world.

For 150 years, we've been finding better ways to produce materials the world needs: the iron ore for steel in buildings and bridges, the aluminium for cars and phones.

Without Australia, we wouldn't be where we are today. It's where more than half our assets are based. And for thousands of our employees, Australia is home.

We're committed to helping build a stronger, more prosperous Australia. And we know there's more we need to do to be a better custodian, neighbour, and business partner.

## Aluminium

- 1 Weipa Operations (Andoom, Amrun, East Weipa)
- 2 Bell Bay Aluminium
- 3 Boyne Smelters Limited
- 4 Gladstone Power Station (42.125%)
- 5 Gove Operations
- 6 Queensland Aluminium Limited
- 7 Tomago Aluminium (51.55%)
- 8 Yarwun

## Minerals

- 9 Argyle
- 10 Dampier Salt (68%)
- 11 Energy Resources of Australia Ltd (68.4%)

## Iron Ore

- 12 Pilbara operations (integrated network of 17 mines, four independent port terminals, a 1,700 kilometre rail network and related infrastructure)

## Hubs

- 13 Brisbane hub
- 14 Perth hub
- 15 Melbourne Office
- 16 Bundoora Technical Development Centre

# A note from **Kellie and Adam**

The relationships we have with Indigenous peoples are a priority for us. We especially value the agreements we have with Traditional Owners of the lands on which we operate. This includes a focus on promoting greater recognition and inclusion of Indigenous peoples in decision-making.



We know we have made mistakes. The destruction of the rock shelters at Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara in May 2020 is a constant reminder of the need to do better.

We are in a new era of recognition for Indigenous people's rights, and we see this as an opportunity to help ensure Indigenous people and communities have the voice they deserve.

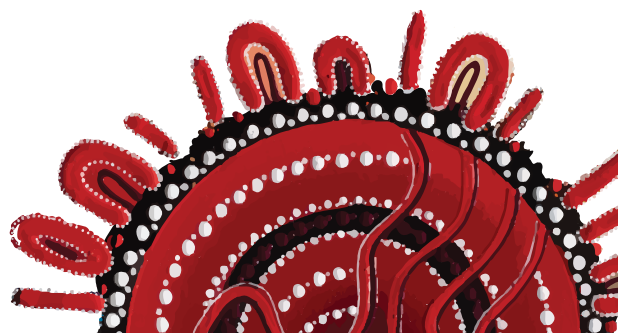
Our Indigenous Affairs Australia team has a very clear purpose: to bring a deeply embedded Indigenous lens to our business and support our workforce on their journey to be more understanding and respectful of Indigenous people and their rights.

We are committed to increasing cultural knowledge, advancing Indigenous leadership and participation in our workforce, and working together with Indigenous communities and partners to create a better future.

We are delighted to share this snapshot of some of the great work underway at Rio Tinto to ensure that Indigenous peoples' voices are respected and valued.

If you would like more information, please get in touch with us at [indigenousaffairsaustralia@riotinto.com](mailto:indigenousaffairsaustralia@riotinto.com)

**Kellie Parker**, Chief Executive Australia and  
**Adam Lees**, Chief Advisor Indigenous Affairs Australia.





A close-up portrait of an Indigenous Australian woman with grey hair and traditional body paint on her face. She is looking upwards and to the left. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. The image is partially covered by a dark red banner at the bottom.

# Our approach to working with Indigenous peoples

We recognise the cultural, spiritual, and physical connections that Indigenous peoples have with land, water, plants, and animals.

We know we have work to do to be better partners with Indigenous peoples. There have been defining moments, such as the destruction of the Juukan Gorge rock shelters, that have compelled us to change our approach. We must do better, and we are determined to improve our approach to engagement with Indigenous peoples, wherever we work.

We need to find better ways to maximise the positive impacts of our operations while partnering with Indigenous peoples to preserve the culture, identity, and language of the communities where we work.

We seek to operate in a manner consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and we strive to obtain the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples.

For more information about our approach to working with Indigenous peoples, please visit [www.riotinto.com/sustainability/indigenous-peoples](http://www.riotinto.com/sustainability/indigenous-peoples)





# Our approach to cultural heritage

## We have strengthened our approach to cultural heritage across our organisation.

In Australia, our operational teams, Communities and Social Performance teams, and Indigenous Affairs team work together on Indigenous Affairs matters. Through this collaboration, we all aim to drive improvement, create a connected learning environment, monitor risks and performance, and improve engagement with Indigenous people and communities with which we work.

### Engaging with Traditional Owners

We have changed the way we engage with Indigenous communities. We are working in close partnership with Indigenous peoples across our operations to preserve and protect cultural heritage. We are moving to a model of co-management to ensure Indigenous voices are heard as part of our decision making.

In November 2022, we agreed with the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura Aboriginal Corporation to create the Juukan Gorge Legacy Foundation. The Foundation was created as part of a remedy agreement relating to the destruction of the rock shelters at Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara region of Western Australia in May 2020. Financial support will be provided to the Traditional Owner-led Foundation to progress major cultural and social projects, including a new keeping place for storing important cultural materials.

As part of our commitment to work together with Traditional Owners, in November 2022, we signed an updated agreement with Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation. The agreement aims to provide better social and economic outcomes for future generations and reflects our commitment to create opportunities for Yindjibarndi people to participate in our operations. The agreement also includes support for Yindjibarndi Aboriginal Corporation to develop community, commercial and cultural projects and programs to fulfil its aspirations of self-determination.

We continue to engage with other Traditional Owner groups to update agreements and co-design our ways of working.

### Engaging with external stakeholders

In 2021, Kellie Parker was appointed Chief Executive Australia to focus on rebuilding trust and strengthening external relationships across Australia. We continue to listen and to learn through increased dialogue with Indigenous leaders, Indigenous Australians, government, civil society organisations and other stakeholders, at all levels of our organisation.

We remain committed to achieving best practice cultural heritage management. We will continue to work with Indigenous peoples, communities, and other stakeholders to ensure we understand priorities and concerns, minimise our impacts, and respect Indigenous cultural heritage.





# Our commitment to Indigenous leadership

We are focussed on fast-tracking Indigenous Australians into professional and leadership roles to ensure we have a stronger representation of diverse voices at our decision-making tables across all our businesses in Australia.

Having true diversity of perspectives, and an Indigenous lens on decision making, will rechart our company moving forward.

The investment to attract, retain and grow has enabled us to increase the number of Australian Indigenous leaders in our business more than sevenfold since November 2020 through internal promotion and recruitment. During 2021 and 2022, 126 Indigenous employees earned promotions across Australia.

## Coaching & development

We have more than 200 Indigenous employees across our Australian business enrolled in a professional leadership program as part of our commitment to develop Indigenous employees and elevate Indigenous voices.

This includes the opportunity for all Indigenous employees in Australia to work with an experienced coach from the Leadership Success organisation. Coaches help participants with practical support, provide tools related to their individual goals and challenges, and guide them in how they can apply these on the job.

The Indigenous Leadership Development program is also available and supports our Indigenous employees to accelerate the transition to roles within our business and bridge any development gaps. It is available for people either leading teams or pursuing a more technical discipline and is tailored to suit each person's specific career aspirations. The program can include access to one of our university partnerships to help employees secure qualifications and develop core business and leadership skills.





## Two-way mentoring program

Our two-way mentoring program presents an important opportunity for our senior leaders in Australia to offer career advice to our Indigenous employees, while gaining a better understanding of some of the challenges they face.

The program is helping build a culture of understanding across our organisation and foster deeper connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees. More than 120 Indigenous employees have been paired through the two-way mentoring program since it commenced at the end of 2020.

## Networking program

We launched our Australia-wide Indigenous employee networking program in 2021, supporting positive relationship building opportunities and a sense of belonging. The networking events provide the opportunity for our Indigenous employees to get together and socialise in an informal environment.

## Cultural Connection

We want all our leaders to be culturally competent and successfully navigate across the various cultures they operate in, to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes.

Cultural Connection ensures that our leaders have an informed understanding of Indigenous culture and know how to build strong trusted relationships with the Indigenous community and Indigenous employees.

In Australia, more than 87% of our senior leaders have completed this catalytic program and we are now delivering the program to our next cohort of leaders in Australia. We also launched a digital cultural onboarding platform to enhance and support cultural safety and understanding.

In our Iron Ore business in Western Australia, our immersive virtual reality cultural awareness training was rolled out in 2021 and is now part of our onboarding process for all employees. We are also implementing regionally specific Traditional Owner-led cultural awareness training across Australia.

## Indigenous participation

In 2023 we re-established the Aboriginal Training and Liaison (ATAL) program through a co-design process with the Traditional Owner groups we work with in the Pilbara. This work ready program is focussed on empowering participants to develop skills for ongoing employment in different jobs and industries across the Pilbara.

## RioInspire

We have partnered with the Australian Graduate School of Management (AGSM) at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) to deliver the RioInspire Indigenous Leadership program. RioInspire is a ground-breaking, globally recognised program that focuses on developing executive-ready Indigenous future leaders who will have an influential role in shaping the future not only for our business and Indigenous Australia, but all Australia.

This partnership has enabled us to develop a program specifically for Rio Tinto Indigenous leaders. RioInspire incorporates Rio Tinto's ways of working, including our values and business priorities. Upon completion, participants receive an AGSM Certificate of Executive Management Development.

## Growing future leaders

As our future leaders, graduates play an important role in achieving our strategic vision for Indigenous leadership. We need more curious and courageous Indigenous graduates – engineers, data scientists, accountants, lawyers, health and safety officers – to shape who we are.

As part of the global Rio Tinto Graduate Program, Indigenous graduates have access to bespoke and accelerated development activities matched to their aspirations as well as a suite of training, tools, and career opportunities. This includes access to two-way mentoring, development coaching and the networking program.

Other development offerings available to all graduates globally include “Gamification” simulation, Graduate talks, Mine-to-Market showcase, a Masterclass series, and an Innovation project.

## Indigenous Development Programs

We have established several Indigenous Development Programs to ensure we have a strong pipeline of Indigenous leaders and professionals across all parts of our business.

The development programs aim to accelerate the development of high-potential Indigenous employees over a period of 18-24 months. Employees are provided with opportunities to further develop their leadership and technical skills which help them progress into more senior roles.



# Creating a culturally safe environment

Creating an environment that is safe for Indigenous employees is a priority at Rio Tinto. Our cultural safety initiatives will be delivered against a national framework in partnership with the Everyday Respect taskforce to ensure all employees feel safe, supported, and respected.

One example is our recently announced Elevating Voices Network in Australia. The Network will be led by a small group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous employee volunteers (Committee) who will come together and activate events, activities, and conversations.

By encouraging connections, building cultural intelligence, and fostering a more culturally safe company, the Committee aims to create stronger links for collaboration, celebrate representation of our Indigenous workforce, enhance current and future initiatives and complement meaningful workplace opportunities through engagement.







# Building Indigenous partnerships

Through collaboration, sponsorship, and partnership with Indigenous communities, we want to help improve the social outcomes for Indigenous peoples.

Our partnerships provide support in key areas such as economic development, community empowerment, preserving Traditional knowledge and practices, promoting sustainable development, and fostering social inclusion.

In 2022, we celebrated 25 years of partnership with Polly Farmer Foundation, 20 years with Clontarf Academy and we are pleased to continue our partnership with the Yothu Yindu Foundation as part of our decade-long sponsorship of the Garna Festival.

We also partner with many other organisations, including not-for-profits, community organisations, and State and local governments to provide funding support for various grassroots community initiatives.

## Jawun

In 2022, we established a five-year partnership with Jawun, a not-for-profit organisation who manage cultural immersion secondments in Indigenous organisations and communities across Australia.

This unique and inspiring partnership offers professional development opportunities for 24 Rio employees and leaders each year to contribute their skills to supporting Aboriginal economic development, while learning about Aboriginal culture and history via a two-way knowledge share model.

As one of many opportunities available across the business to build cultural intelligence, the Jawun partnership is fostering connections and understanding between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, contributing to the cultural shift we are striving for within our business and beyond.





## **Polly Farmer Foundation**

We have supported the Polly Farmer Foundation for over 26 years to empower young Indigenous people to have an enriching and successful education with a wide range of career and life choices.

The Polly Farmer Foundation is a non-profit organisation established in 1994 and aims to support and empower Indigenous Australian students through education and leadership programs. Since its inception, over 3000 Indigenous students have graduated from the program with more than 75% going onto further studies or into direct employment.

The program provides positive pathways to employment and aims to enrich students experiences outside of the school environment, amplify their voices, and build leadership capabilities.

The Polly Farmer Foundation has a positive impact on the lives of many Indigenous Australians by providing educational opportunities, developing leadership skills, strengthening cultural identity, and supporting mental health. Its programs have helped to bridge the educational gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and enable Indigenous students to reach their full potential.

## **Clontarf Foundation**

We have partnered with the Clontarf Foundation since 2008 and are one of the leading employers of Clontarf's Year 12 graduates, with students going on to join our business in many areas.

The Clontarf Foundation (Clontarf) is a non-profit organization that focuses on improving the education, employment, health, and lifestyle outcomes of young Indigenous men in Australia. It uses a unique approach that combines sport and education to engage and inspire Indigenous students.

Clontarf's program focuses on improving educational outcomes by providing students with a safe, supportive, and engaging environment. Clontarf believes that education is the key to breaking the cycle of Indigenous disadvantage and aims to provide its participants with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in life. Clontarf achieves this by using sport as a tool to engage young people in their education. It runs sporting programs that focus on developing team skills, positive attitudes, and leadership qualities. These programs are run by trained coordinators and supported by other school staff.

By exposing students to positive role models, providing mentoring, and forging meaningful connections with Elders and role models in the community, the academy programs seek to inspire participants to achieve their goals and become leaders in their communities.

Clontarf also provides employment and career guidance programs, camps, and other resources that help participants to develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and resilience, which are essential for success in life.

## **Western Australian Football Commission**

Established in 2021, Rio Tinto's three-year partnership with the West Australian Football Commission (WAFC) has been developed with the objective to strengthen relationships and connection with Western Australian and Indigenous communities through the power of football.

WAFC aims to provide opportunities for Indigenous Australians to participate in Australian Football, to develop their skills, and to promote their health, wellbeing, social inclusivity and cultural identity.

The partnership supports both male and female football segments and creates leadership and employment opportunities in football for Indigenous participants while using sport as a vehicle to enhance cultural awareness across all levels of the game in Western Australia.

## **Queensland Rugby Union**

Rio Tinto and the Queensland Rugby Union signed their first agreement in 2013 with the support of Cherbourg and Woorabinda Indigenous communities in Queensland.

The partnership was established to deliver the Future Indigenous Leaders Program which aims to identify primary school students in these communities who show potential leadership qualities. From here, students are mentored through to year 10 to ensure they maintain school attendance above 95% while consistently showing positive behaviour at school, on social media, and in the wider community.

## **Athletics Australia**

We also support Athletics Australia's Athletics for the Outback and Raise the Bar programs that aim to increase opportunities for remote and Indigenous communities to participate in athletics and provide a platform for participants to explore tertiary education and career opportunities after school.





## Indigenous Emerging Business Forum

The Indigenous Emerging Business Forum Aboriginal Corporation (IEBF) is a not-for-profit organisation that supports the growth and development of Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs. It was established to provide a platform for Indigenous business people to network, learn, and collaborate with each other and with other business professionals across Australia.

The IEBF bridges the gap through connecting the community and encouraging small to large businesses to work collaboratively to stimulate Indigenous growth and focuses on encouraging and assisting employment and business development opportunities for Indigenous peoples.

In 2022, we established a three-year partnership to sponsor the IEBF's annual forums which aims to promote and develop Indigenous enterprises by showcasing their products and services, build their networks, and explore funding opportunities.

## Community partnerships

Our businesses in Australia also manage local partnerships at a community level that complement our Australia-wide efforts.

At our Weipa operations, we are committed to providing a culturally competent and respectful workplace that promotes increased access, participation, retention and advancement of Indigenous peoples, specifically local Aboriginal people to support them to achieve their personal aspirations within Rio Tinto. The school to work pathways continues to support and implement several programs, including school-based traineeships and the paid school leavers program, to engage young people with the long-term intent of improving employment and training outcomes for local Aboriginal students.

At our Gove operations, the Dhuka Mala all-Indigenous work group program has been running for nine years and provides a focus on education, training, and employment of North-East Arnhem Land clan members. The program incorporates work-readiness with on-the-job training to develop pathways to employment.

Dhupuma Barker at Gunyangara, Arnhem Land represents a new model of education for Indigenous people where independent schools partner to provide transformative levels of education to students in language and English.

Rio Tinto has committed A\$4 million in funding for this transformative education initiative which will go towards construction of permanent school classrooms and facilities which will also double as a community centre and cyclone shelter.

The community has worked with local designers and builders to develop a model for the school which is deeply sympathetic to Country and meets current education standards. Since opening in April 2021, Dhupuma Barker has gone from strength-to-strength, with student engagement and attendance exceeding expectations and improving every day.

At our Bell Bay smelter in northern Tasmania, we have partnered with local school South George Town Primary on a project called "A Sense of Place". This program celebrates the school's vision of including the philosophies and practices of the Palawa people of Lutrawitta/Tasmania in the education of their students from kindergarten to year 6.

Throughout our Iron Ore operations, we support community-led initiatives that provide connection to culture, opportunities for healing and strengthening families; holistic support to achieve generational change and ongoing access to and care of Country. Our funding contributes to areas we operate in and towns where our fly-in-fly-out workforce reside and include a culturally safe early learning program, Waja Guma in Karratha, and Safe Spaces program for at-risk-youth in Roebourne delivered by the Police Citizens Youth Club.

We also recognise the importance of Traditional Owners taking the lead in caring for Country and the long-lasting benefits for the environment and people.

In 2022, we contributed A\$3.25 million to Murujuga Aboriginal Corporation to fund a Ranger Program that will play a vital role in the conservation and recording of Aboriginal culture and heritage on the Burrup Peninsula.

We have also developed a five-year partnership with the Pilbara Cultural Land Management Project, an Indigenous led partnership of twelve Pilbara Traditional Owner groups, supporting the establishment, growth and maintenance of cultural land management programs to create a vibrant and resilient land management sector for the Pilbara.



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing safety glasses and a high-visibility yellow polo shirt, is working in a nursery. She is carefully tending to small green seedlings in black plastic trays. The background shows more trays of seedlings and some trees under a bright sky.

# Supporting Indigenous businesses

We are improving our approach to Indigenous business development and engagement in Australia and around the world. It is vital that our operations contribute to the local communities to ensure they thrive and remain sustainable.

We have a choice about what we buy, and from where. Partnerships with local suppliers support jobs and the economy and encourage innovation. This unlocks new opportunities for local businesses that will help keep our communities strong and sustainable.

In 2022, we spent A\$565 million with 154 Indigenous businesses across Australia, 40% higher than the year before.

In December 2017, the Gulkula Mine opened which is the first Indigenous owned and operated bauxite mine in the world. It is owned and operated by Gumatj, one of the Yolngu clans of Northeast Arnhem Land.

The bauxite is mined and then sold to Rio Tinto for export both nationally and internationally. The Gulkula Regional Training Centre was developed with A\$2.4 million in funding from Rio Tinto. It provides on-the-job training to the Yolngu people to build careers in the mining industry in the Northern Territory and beyond.





# Our support for **constitutional recognition**

As one of the largest employers of Indigenous Australians and a company that operates on the lands of Indigenous peoples, we have long supported constitutional recognition of Indigenous Australians. We backed the ‘Recognise’ campaign in 2015, through to the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Our support is consistent with the principle of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples having a greater say in matters that affect them, and we are pleased to advocate for the rights of Indigenous peoples on whose land we live and work.

In May 2023, we announced our donation of A\$2 million to the Australians for Indigenous Constitutional Recognition in support of the “Yes23” campaign for an Indigenous Voice to Parliament.

We respect that there are differences of opinion on this important topic, and we will provide opportunities for our employees to gain greater insight, perspective, and understanding of the need for reconciliation in an unbiased way. We are committed to providing our employees all the information needed to make an informed response to this important question.



We are committed to elevating Indigenous voices and increasing cultural knowledge in our business and beyond.

Every level of our company must be actively guided and informed by Indigenous experiences, views, and voices.

We know we must continue to work hard to build a culture of active inclusion and cultural safety, where people live our values and speak up freely when something does not feel right. We remain committed to learning and moving forward in new ways – always side by side – with Indigenous peoples and the communities that host us.

To learn more, please contact us at  
[IndigenousAffairsAustralia@riotinto.com](mailto:IndigenousAffairsAustralia@riotinto.com)

